

8

the KUROSAKI ~~script~~ delivery service

黒鷲死体宅配便

chief OTSUKA 大塚英志 houseki yamazaki 山崎峰水

STAFF A



Psychic

[イタコ]・死体との対話

STAFF B



Dowsing

[ダウジング]・死体の位置

STAFF C



Hacking

[ハッキング]・情報収集

YOUR BODY IS THEIR BUSINESS!



黒鷲死体宅配便

the KUROSAKI corpse delivery service



story

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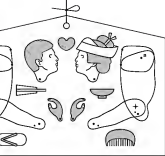
lettering and touch-up

IHL



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WELL, WE'RE
KIND OF
STUDENT
ENTREPRE-
NEURS. SO
WHAT DO YOU
THINK...?



MAYBE
I'LL
ENROLL
AFTER
ALL...



1st delivery
学生街の喫茶店

a café in a campus town








ONLY FOUR
SO FAR.

ANYONE
YET?

KURODASHI CASH MONEY-MAKIN' CLUB

Why be dead broke when you could stack up like the banks?
YOU MUST HAVE ONE OF THE
FOLLOWING QUALIFICATIONS TO JOIN:

- 1) Like or have an interest in corpses.
- 2) Can see or speak with spirits.
- 3) Have a special ability that others do not.



WOW, THERE'S
NO POINT IN
GETTING NEW
MEMBERS IF
THEY CAN'T HELP
THE TEAM.



WELL, THE CLUB'S
JUST A FRONT
SINCE WE FORMED
THE DELIVERY
BUSINESS. ANYWAY,
WE'RE ONLY DOING
THIS SO WE DON'T
LOSE OUR MEETING
SPACE.



I DUNNO,
MAYBE OUR
CONDITIONS
ARE TOO
STRICT.

HAVING CHANGED
OUR OFFICIAL NAME
FROM THE "KURO-
DASHI VOLUNTEER
SERVICE CLUB" TO
THE "KURODASHI
CASH MONEY-MAKIN'
CLUB" DOESN'T
SEEM TO BE HAVING
MUCH EFFECT.







I'M AO SASAKI,
THE CHAIRMAN
OF THIS CLUB...





IT'S KIND OF
BASIC FOR ME,
THOUGH--THE
BODY'S STILL
IN ONE PIECE.
WOULD YOU
LIKE TO SEE
MORE...?



NOW I'M INSIDE
A CORPSE'S
P.C. THE FOLDER
CONTAINS
PICTURES OF
BOYB, TAKEN
BEFORE
AUTOPSY...

THIS CALIFORNIA
MAN RIGHT ABOVE
FOR EXAMPLE, HAD
HIS HEAD CRUSHED
BY A TRACTOR
WHEEL DURING
THE MAIZE
HARVEST.



Ao Sasaki

Special Talent: Hacking



I...oh-oh-oh
it was the
m-missile
chips...



W-W-WELL...
P-P-PERHAPS
ANOTHER
T-T-TIME...



YEP.

SCRATCH
ONE
RECRUIT.

IS SOME-
THING THE
MATTER?







Yuji Yata

Special Talent: Channeling



I'M
SORRY...
THAT
WASN'T
ME.

WELL, REALLY?
OFTEN WE
GOTHIC LOUIGAS
STREVE TO
EMULATE THE
MANNERS OF A
MORE REFINED
AGE, BUT YOU
CAN JUST GO
FLICK YOURSELF!



Yeah-uh? LIKE
YOU ARE ABOUT
TO ENTER THE
MOST FASCINAT-
ING SPHERE OF
UNDERGRADU-
ATE WORK...

HOW IS
THAT A
LIFE-SIZE
MODEL?



Haven't I
seen you
displayed as
Museum-
card?

UH...I'M
MAKING MY
SPECIAL
TALENT IS
MAKING
FIGURINES
AND MODELS.



EMBAL-
ING...?



Heem...IF
YOU'RE GOOD
WITH YOUR
Hands,
MAYBE YOU
CAN DO SOME
EMBALING.



...DEAD?



AMAZING. THE TRUTH IS, I HAVE A LIFE-SIZE AGUKA FIGURE IN MY ROOM, AND...

oh... you ever put it *back* down...



PRETTY good, huh? YOU WOULDN'T EVEN THINK SHE WAS *dead*. I EMBALMED HER FOR A LOCAL SURGICAL SCHOOL...

...THE WORLD OF *forensic medicine!*



OH, YOU TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.



FAR AWAY, IS MY GUESS.

NOW, YOU'LL NOTICE SHE'S NOT *ORNY-LIKE* CADAVERS EMBALMED FOR STUDY USUALLY ARE--*she's* BECAUSE I USED A CUSTOM MIX OF 38% FORMALDEHYDE AND RED DYE, WITH A GRAVITY-FEED--WHERE DID HE GO?



SEE, THIS IS THE "before" HORRIBLE, HUN? IT? HER OWN BROTHER CHOPPED HER INTO PIECES.

THIS PART *here* WAS STARTING TO ROT ALREADY, AND I HAD A HARD TIME RESTORING IT...











...B-BUT WHAT DO YOU GUYS DO WITH ALL THESE SKILLS, THOUGH? YOU SAID YOU WERE STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS... HOW DO YOU MAKE MONEY THIS WAY...?



UM... INTERESTING.

SO WHAD'YA THINK?



WE'RE NOT LIKE MOST PEOPLE AT THIS SCHOOL... WHO HAVE A JOB LINED UP AT THE FAMILY TEMPLE AFTER THEY GRADUATE.



DON'T WORRY. THE TRUTH IS, WE ALREADY HAVE A BUSINESS.

WELL, WE KINDA WONDER ABOUT THAT SOMETIMES OURSELVES.



OUR FIRM IS CALLED...
THE KUROBAGI CORPSE DELIVERY SERVICE.



NO INTERNSHIPS FOR US. WE HAD TO FORM OUR OWN COMPANY.

WE'RE NOT REALLY THE KUROBAGI GUN CLUB.



YOU WANT TO JOIN
US FOR OUR NEXT
RUN? WE'LL SHOW
YOU HOW THE
BUSINESS WORKS.
I SUPPOSE WE CAN
CALL IT ON-THE-
JOB TRAINING.



UM...
OKAY.



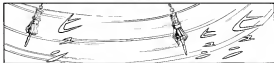


AS MUCH AS
YOU CAN FIND
SOMETHING
ELSE, DON'T
YOU THINK
YOU
SHOULD?

**SHUT
UP!**



where? THIS IS
CALLED **POSSING**.
NORMALLY, IT'S
USED TO FIND
VEINS OF
PRECIOUS ORE
OR WATER, BUT
IN MY CASE, THE
PENDULUM IS ABLE
TO LOCATE DEAD
BODIES AS
WELL....



PEOPLE KILL
THEMSELVES
LIKE THEY'RE
HITTING THE
RESET BUTTON
ON A game.

SPRINGTIME...
SEASON OF
SLICES. A LOT
PEOPLE GET
TURNED DOWN
FOR JOBS OR
COLLEGES.



I'M
GETTING A
READING!
**CORPSE
AHEAD!**

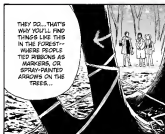


C'MON!
LET'S GO
LOOK AT
CORPSES!

HEY...
WAIT UP,
NIMATA!



UM... I
DON'T
WANT TO
LOOK
AT--



THEY DO... THAT'S
WHY YOU'LL FIND
THINGS LIKE THIS
IN THE FOREST--
WHERE PEOPLE
TIED REBONS AS
MARKERS, OR
SPRAY-PAINTED
ARROWS ON THE
TREES...



UH, I DON'T
KNOW ABOUT
THIS... DON'T
PEOPLE GET
LOST HERE
ALL THE TIME,
TOO?

HE NEVER
CHANGES.



...BUT THESE
DAYS, YOU CAN
DO A MUCH
BETTER JOB OF
FINDING YOUR
WAY WITH A
GPS UNIT.

COMPASSES HAVE
A REPUTATION FOR
BEING USELESS
HERE--THEY SAY
IT'S BECAUSE OF
THE MAGNETIC
NATURE OF THE
LOCAL ROCKS...



WA-
RAH!!



I BOUGHT
ONE IN A
RARE
MOMENT OF
SURPLUS.

I DIDN'T
KNOW WE
HAD ONE
OF THOSE.



WELL, HE'S
ALWAYS
LIKE THAT,
SO I'M
SURE HE'LL
BE FI--

BUT
NUMATA
RAN OFF
ON HIS
OWN...





...DOWN THERE.

ALREADY
HOW DO YOU
KNOW?



WELL...
LMA...

...I TH-
THINK
MAYBE
THERE'S
ONE THAT
WAY.



OH, YOU
MEAN...



WELL, THAT'S
NOT EXACTLY
UNCOMMON IN
THIS HOTSPOT
FOR SURE.



WHAT
IS IT?

SLEEPING
PILL...
HALCON.



...IT'S
BEEN
KNOWN TO
HAPPEN.

HAD TO HAVE
BEEN RECENT...IT
RAINED A FEW
DAYS AGO, MAYBE
SOMEONE WAS
HAVING SECOND
THOUGHTS, AND
DROPPED THEM TO
MARK A TRAIL...?



BUT I
SEE MORE
OF THEM
OVER
HERE...

...
THEY'RE
RUNNING
IN A SORT
OF LINE.









TAKING THEM TO
THE DESTINATION
OF THEIR
WISH...IS WHAT
THE KUROBAGI
CORPSE DELIVERY
SERVICE DOES.



IT COULD BE
RETURNING TO
A LOVER, OR
TO THEIR
FAMILY...OR,
WITH THE
VICTIMS OF
CRIME...EVEN
TO THE PERSON
WHO MURDERED
THEM.

CORPSES
OFTEN HAVE
SOME PLACE
THEY WOULD
LIKE TO GO,
BEFORE
MOVING ON TO
THE NEXT LIFE.













...JUST
NOW
THIRD-RATE
IS OUR
SCHOOL?

"Backup
of a
Backup?"



...THE ONLY
COLLEGE I GOT
ACCEPTED TO
WAS THE ONE I
TOOK...AS A
BACKUP OF A
BACKUP.

I WAS NEVER
VERY GOOD AT
STUDYING--BUT
STILL, I DIDN'T
THINK SO MANY
SCHOOLS
WOULD TURN
ME DOWN...



BUT YOU
OOK THE ONE
ACCEPTANCE
LETTER WITH
YOU...

...AND YOU
CAME OUT
TO THE
WOODS.



BUT I'M JUST
LIKE YOU
GUYS...I DIDN'T
HAVE ANY
CONNECTIONS
TO A TEMPLE
OR ANYTHING
LIKE THAT...



...I TOOK THE
LAST PILL, AND
I THOUGHT...
WHEN I WAKE
UP...I'LL GO
THERE AND SEE.

WHEN I WALKED
INTO AOKIGAWARA,
I BEGAN TO
THINK, MAYBE I
SHOULDN'T GIVE
UP LIKE THIS...

...I COULDN'T
FACE MY PARENTS
AND TELL THEM
WHAT HAD
HAPPENED...I
JUST PLACED ALL
MY REJECTION
LETTERS ON THE
KITCHEN TABLE...





CAN
I...?



LISTEN, I KNOW
A WAY TO
CLEAR UP THAT
REGRET. LET US
TAKE YOU TO
OUR SCHOOL
THE WAY YOU
WANTED TO...
IN YOUR OLD
FLESH.

...YEAH,
IT IS.



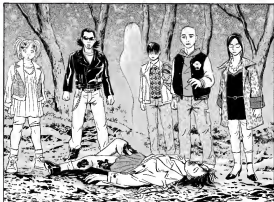
NEED
A LIFT
BACK TO
CAMPUS?

YOU'RE
NOT A
CUSTOMER
...YOU'RE A
MEMBER OF
THE GLORY



I...I'D
LIKE THAT
VERY
MUCH.







AT LEAST
HER FAMILY
WAS GLAD
WE FOUND
HER.

...FIVE
MINUS
FIVE
EQUALS
ZERO.
Y'KNOW.



OH MAN,
THAT IS
SO NOT
FUNNY AS
A PUNCH
LINE!

ASTONISH
THEY DON'T
FIND OUT
SHE'S ONLY
HERE IN
SPIRIT.



AND WE GET
TO KEEP OUR
ROOM, TOO,
'CAUSE WE
ACTUALLY
ENROLLED
A NEW
RECRUIT.



HMM... I WAS
GOING TO TELL
THEM TO SETTLE
DOWN... BUT I
GUESS SHE
WOULD HAVE HAD
TO GET USED TO
THOSE IDIOTS,
TOO.

ACTUALLY,
IT'S SO NOT
FUNNY AT
ALL! COME
OVER HERE
FOR A
PUPPET
BEATING!

WAIT,
MUMAKU!
DON'T YOU
THINK IT'S
A LITTLE
FUNNY?



2nd delivery
ロマンス
romance





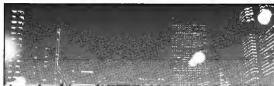


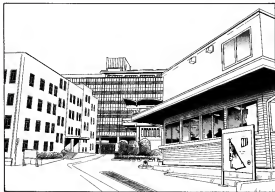












*SOMETHING OLD,
SOMETHING NEW,
DOES THE WEDDING
RHyme. AND WE'RE
HERE TO LEARN
ABOUT AN OLD STYLE
OF MARRIAGE THAT'S
BECOMING THE
NEWEST TREND IN
TOKYO. MR. KANEAR?*



*WE'VE STARTED
ARRANGING
MEETINGS FOR
SOMETHING
CALLED THE
NEIKONSHIKI.*



*THAT'S RIGHT, EXC.
WE'RE BASICALLY
BRINGING BACK A
CLASSIC TRADITION,
INTENDED FOR THOSE
WHO'VE PASSED AWAY
WITHOUT THE SOLACE
OF HAVING FOUND
THAT SPECIAL
PERSON IN LIFE...*



OH,
YEAH...THE
DAY KIDNEL-
LING HAD THE
SPACE SHOT.

...HUNT
YOU'RE
RIGHT.

SAY, KARNITELL
ISN'T THIS THE
ITALIAN PEN
GUYS THE
HILLS TOBE
CLIDE?



...WELL, EXACT. THE
IDEA IS THAT IF
TWO PEOPLE HAVE
DIED AT A YOUNG
AGE, WE CAN
STILL BRING THEM
TOGETHER
AFTERWARDS.

WHY DON'T
YOU TELL
US A LITTLE
BIT ABOUT
IT, MR.
KARNITELL?



THEY DON'T DO
IT FOR THE
DEAD...THEY DO
IT FOR THEIR
PARENTS.

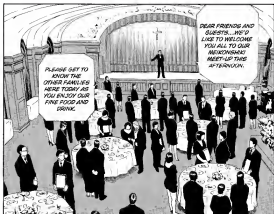


UMMM...
WHAT'S THE
POINT OF
GETTING
MARRIED
AFTER YOU
DIED?

















I KNOW IT'S
DIFFICULT TO
TALK ABOUT IT.
FOR ME, IT WAS
MY OLDER
BROTHER.
A TRAFFIC
ACCIDENT,
LAST YEAR...



IT...IT WAS
MY YOUNGER
SISTER...HAD
SHE STILL BEEN
ALIVE, SHE...SHE
WOULD HAVE
BEEN ABOUT
THE...THE AGE
OF MY FRIEND
HERE...

...WHO
WAS IT
THAT YOU
LOST?



OH, I'M
SORRY. MY
SISTER WAS
VERY PARTI-
CULAR ABOUT
LOOKS.



...GEE-
HUI.

DID THEY
TURN YOU
DOWN...?



WELL,
I'VE
SEEN
ENOUGH,
ANYWAY.

I THINK
WE
SHOULD
LEAVE
SOON.



THERE WERE
MAYBE A DOZEN
FAMILIES THERE,
EACH PAYING
300,000 YEN
TO GET IN.

WELL, HE
DIDN'T
SEEM LIKE
THE CHAR-
ITABLE TYPE
TO ME.

THE CATERING,
THE VENUE, THE
ORCHESTRA...IT'S
ALL VERY HIGH
CLASS. SO HIGH
I STILL DON'T SEE
WHERE THEY'RE
MAKING MONEY
OFF THIS.

YEAH,
SOMETHING
IS THE
MATTER
AROUND
HERE.

WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?

YEAH, NOT
LIKE SOME
IDIOTS

IS SOME-
THING THE
MATTER,
KARATSU
...?



MY DEAR
DEPARTED
SON WAS
BETROTHED
TO HER.



NOT ONLY AN
OFFENSE TO
YOU, MR.
SEIJO. SURELY
YOUR SON IS
SLEEPING IN THE
AFTERLIFE.

AFTER MY SON'S
SUDDEN PASSING,
THEY CAME
AROUND TO GIVE
THEIR REGRETS
THAT IT COULDN'T
HAPPEN...CAN
YOU IMAGINE
HOW THAT
FELT...?

WE, THE
SEIJO FAMILY,
ARRANGED IT
WITH THE
GOTOHARA
FAMILY YEARS
AGO, WHEN THEY
BOTH WERE
CHILDREN.



DON'T
CONCERN
YOURSELF
ANY FURTHER,
SIR...WE
SHALL MAKE
ALL THE
ARRANGE-
MENTS.



MONEY IS
NOT AN
ISSUE.

...IT'S A
MATTER OF
FAMILY HONOR,
YOU SEE.
SOMETHING ALL
TOO FEW SEEM
TO UNDER-
STAND TODAY,
MR. KANEHARA.





3rd delivery

僕は死なないだろう

i probably won't die





UH-HUH...
THAT'S
RIGHT.

YEAH... I
JUST GOT
TO THE
STATION...



OKAY,
THEN I'LL
EMAIL YOU
LATER.



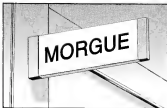
HELLO



DARLING...









...WELL...I'M
ORGANIZING A
YOUTH SOFTBALL
LEAGUE TO HELP
KEEP WAYWARD
LIBERAL ARTS
GRADUATES OUT
OF TROUBLE.



SO WHAT
DO YOU
WANT FROM
US TODAY,
SASAYAMA
...?



HA, HA,
BALDY.

BUT THAT'S
NEXT WEEK.
TODAY, I NEED
YOU TO ID A
CORPSE, IDIOT.



THAT'S
NOT WHAT
I MEANT...



HAVEN'T WE
BEEN OVER
THIS BEFORE?
SHE'S A JANE
DOE. OTHER-
WISE, THE
CITY HAS TO
PAY FOR HER
FUNERAL.

...I DON'T GET
IT. WHY DO YOU
NEED OUR HELP
TO FIND OUT
WHO SHE IS?



NO, I DON'T THINK SHE WAS CARRYING A WALLET IN THE FIRST PLACE. INSTEAD SHE WAS A LITTLE TOO MODERN...USING HER CELL PHONE AS HER ATM CARD AND HER TRAIN PASS. VERY CONVENIENT...BUT NOT ANY MORE, AS YOU CAN SEE.



NOT A HOMELESS PERSON WHO DIED IN THE STREET...DON'T SHE HAVE ANY IDENTIFICATION ON HER? WAS SHE NERVOUS, OR SOMETHING...?

LOOK AT HER. I'D GUESS SHE WAS AN OFFICE WORKER.



DON'T GIVE ME ONE, AND I'LL DO IT.

SO, I JUST NEED YOU TO DO YOUR THING LIKE USUAL.

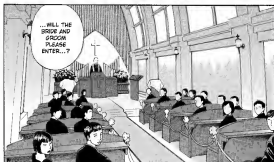


WHO ARE YOU...? TELL ME.











THAT, I
DON'T
KNOW...

DOESN'T QUITE
ADD UP, THOUGH.
THE GUY DIED
OVER A YEAR
AGO. IF HIS
GHOST MANAGED
TO TAKE HER
WITH HIM... WHY'D
HE WAIT SO LONG
TO DO IT?



TAKE A
LOOK...
IT'S HER.







YES...WELL...
IT'S A SYMBOLIC
RITUAL, YOU
KNOW. SO YES,
WE COULD DO IT
THAT WAY, TOO.
THERE'S A
HIGHER FEE...



UMMM...I HEARD
ABOUT YOUR
MEMORIAL
CEREMONY...
IS IT TRUE...THE
OTHER PERSON
DOESN'T HAVE
TO BE...DEAD
YET...?



ALL RIGHT,
SIR, WE CAN
ARRANGE AN
APPOINT-
MENT...

REALLY? AS
LONG...AS
LONG AS MY
BROTHER CAN
BE HAPPY,
IT'S NOT A
PROBLEM...



...A
MESSAKARI
ENA...
JUST LIKE
BEFORE.



I NEED
YOU TO
DRAW
AGAIN...



...BACK
TO WORK,
KID.





















4th delivery

ラブソングはいらない

no need for a love song























IN THERE...
RIGHT
THERE...
CHECK THE
TRUNK.



YOU
MEAN
HE'S IN
HERE?

I THINK WE'RE
NOT EVEN
GONNA HAVE
TO GO INSIDE.



O-KAY,
THEN...



YEAH,
OPEN
IT!

WHAT...
JUST
OPEN
IT?

How can
anybody
be so stupid
as to let
anybody
into the
building?







FORTUNATELY
...



THIS KIND OF KILLING
MEANS ONLY ONE
THING...ORGANIZED
CRIME. AND THE FACT
THEY WERE WILLING
TO DO IT MEANS
THEY'D DO THE SAME
TO US...IF THEY
CATCH ON TO
WHO WE ARE.



WHAT'S
THIS?

ST...

...WE
ARE WHO
WE ARE.



AH-HA...



BLANK. MY
GUESS IT
WOULD NEED
SOMEONE
WITH SKILL
TO MAKE IT
WORK.

IT'S AN
EYE ..











M-
MARRY...
ME....!







THIS SHRINE COMES FROM THE NORTH-EAST, WHERE THE *SENGO AKERON* TRADITION IS STRONGEST. IT WAS MOVED TO TOKYO DURING THE WAR... SO THAT THE SOULS WHO DIED IN BATTLE COULD BE MARRIED IN THE AFTERLIFE.



SASAKI SAYS THE TECHNICAL TERM IS *POLYGYNY*.



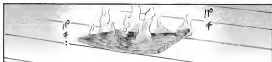
WHOA!
HOT!
HOT!



THIS IS SASAKI'S
SNAKE... WHAT'S
IT DOING BROKEN...?



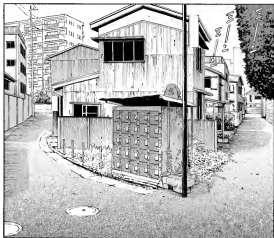
...HART
WHAT'S
THIS?



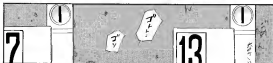
WHAT
THE
HELL?

I GUESS IT
MEANS... IT'S
NOT TIME
FOR SASAKI
TO DIE YET.

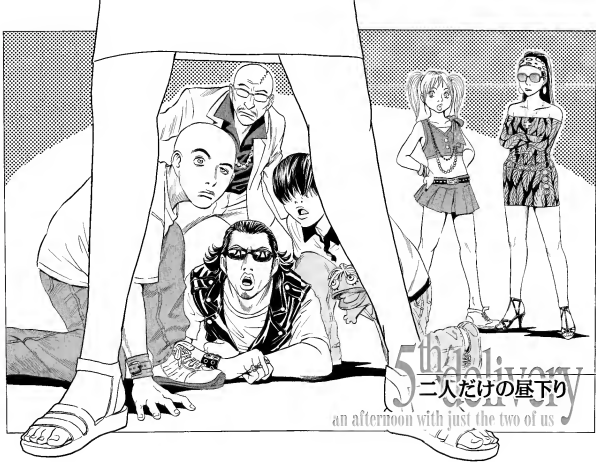












5th delivery
二人だけの昼下り
an afternoon with just the two of us







...THEY
STILL HAVE
SOULS, YOU
KNOW...



I'M SURE THERE
ARE CERTAIN
CULTURAL TRADI-
TIONS, BUT OUR
PURPOSE HERE IS
TO CLEAN THE
BODY SUFFICIENTLY
FOR PRESENTA-
TION...



AHEM. MS.
KIKUCHI. NOW,
WE'RE REALLY
GOING OUT-
SIDE THE
PROCEDURE,
AREN'T WE?



NOW, WHY
DON'T WE
START OVER,
MS. KIKUCHI?
EXPUL THE
CONTENTS OF
THE STOMACH,
PLEASE.



DON'T MIX
MEDICAL
PRACTICE
WITH SUPER-
STITIONS.

THEY--MS.
KIKUCHI,
PLEASE.
THAT'S A
MATTER FOR
A PRIEST.
WE'RE
NURSES.



“ソウ”



“ア”



...YES,
MA'AM.



HE'S
ALIVE!

DID YOU
HEAR
THAT?

EEEE-
YAAA!



LOC...
KER...



IT
TALKED.

BUT...
DIDN'T
YOU
HEAR...



CALM
DOWN!

WHAT YOU
JUST HEARD
WAS AIR
EXPULSED
FROM THE
STOMACH,
VIBRATING
THE VOCAL
CORDS...



UWA...



UWA...

THE DEAD
BELOW ALL
RIGHT? THAT'S
WHY WE PUT
COTTON IN
THEIR MOUTHS,
IF ONE OF YOU
CAN BE
TROUBLED
TO...







M-MRS.
KIKUCHI
...?!



WHAT'S
HAPPEN-
ING?!

H-HE
CAME
BACK
TO
LIFE!

SOME-
ONE
GET THE
DOCTOR!



DOCTOR,
IT'S THE
ALARM
FOR THE
BABY
DROP...

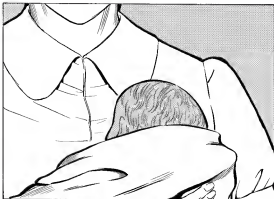


FINALLY
FINISHED
THE
ROUNDS
FOR THE
DAY...
HUB?

...BOY,
THAT'S ONE
ENERGETIC
BABY... I
CAN HEAR
HIM ALL
THE WAY IN
HERE.

REALLY
...







WHA? DON'T YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS, NUMATA?

Watch more news on TV

BABY? DROPPED IT OFF?

YEAH, BUT WHY'D YOU BRING IT HERE...?

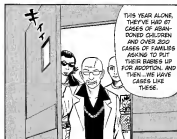


SOMEONE DROPPED OFF A BABY?



OH, YEAH, YEAH, YEAH, RIGHT. DIDN'T PEOPLE SAY IT WAS GONNA ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO DUMP THEIR KIDS?

IT'S SO PEOPLE DON'T JUST ABANDON UNWANTED BABIES TO THE ELEMENTS. HOSPITALS SET UP AN ANONYMOUS DROP-BOX FOR THEM, AND THEY GET CARED FOR.

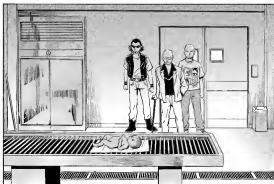


THIS YEAR ALONE, THEY'VE HAD 67 CASES OF ABANDONED CHILDREN AND OVER 200 CASES OF FAMILIES ASKING TO PUT THEIR BABIES UP FOR ADOPTION. AND THEN...WE HAVE CASES LIKE THESE.



YEAH...AND THERE WAS AN INCIDENT WHERE A DAD PUT HIS THREE YEAR-OLD IN ONE.

MORGUE



THERE AREN'T TOO MANY RESOURCES IN JAPAN TO ASSIST WITH UNWANTED PREGNANCIES. THAT'S WHY THE HOSPITAL'S NEW DROP BOX SYSTEM HAS BEEN OVERWHELMED... PEOPLE EVEN COME FROM OUTSIDE THE PREFECTURE TO USE IT.



PEOPLE KEEP THEIR PREGNANCIES A SECRET...OR THEY CARRY THEM TO TERM BECAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE THE MONEY FOR AN ABORTION...OR THEY JUST PANIC.

OR
BALANCE
SHEET...
SAME
THING.

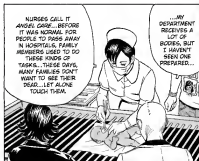
THAT'S WHY
I LIKE YOU,
KARATSU!
YOU CAN
SEE SO
DEEP INTO
MY HEART.



...WHICH
MEANS WHEN
THE BABY IS
DEAD, IT
BECOMES
YOUR
PROBLEM.







NURSES CALL IT ANGEL CARE... BEFORE IT WAS NORMAL FOR PEOPLE TO PASS AWAY IN HOSPITALS, FAMILY MEMBERS USED TO DO THESE KINDS OF TASKS... THESE DAYS, MANY FAMILIES DON'T WANT TO SEE THEIR DEAD... LET ALONE TOUCH THEM.

...MY DEPARTMENT RECEIVES A LOT OF BODIES, BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN ONE PREPARED...



YES...AND THIS IS WHY WE HAVE TO TAKE THE PLACE OF THE FAMILY, AND PREPARE THEIR SPIRITS FOR THE AFTERLIFE...



SO THEY GET ABANDONED ...JUST LIKE NEWBORNS.



I GOT SCOLDING FOR THAT IN TRAINING TODAY...

BUT YOU'RE RIGHT.



...SHE...SHE BELIEVED THAT THE SPIRIT REMAINED IN THE BODY AFTER DEATH, YOU SEE. I KIND OF THINK THE SAME THING.

OH... WELL--MY GRANDMOTHER WAS VERY SUPERSTITIOUS, AND SORT OF STRANGE, SO...















Side delivery: an afternoon with just the two of us—the real







IT'S CALLED A SANTOGAMA.
IT MEANS "NEWBORN'S
GHELL." IN THE TOHOKU
REGION, THEY WERE ONCE
USED BY IMPOVERISHED
FAMILIES FOR
MURDER... INFANTICIDE.

IT'S THE SAME TERM RICE
FARMERS USE WHEN THEY
TIN OUT THEIR SEEDLINGS.
ABORTED BABIES AND
NEWBORNS ALIKE WOULD BE
PLACED INSIDE... DOWN A
RIVER TO FLOAT AWAY.



YEAH.
WELL?



SYMBOL-
ISM OF
WHAT?!



IT'S NOT
EXACTLY
A MODERN
PRACTICE...
BUT IT COULD
HAVE BEEN
ADOPTED
FOR ITS
SYMBOLISM.



DO YOU
THINK THE
GUILTY PART
FROM
THERE...?



WHAT ARE YOU EVEN
TALKING ABOUT?
THE SYSTEM IS
DESIGNED TO *SAVE*
THE LIVES OF
ABANDONED BABIES!
IT'S NOTHING LIKE
INFANTICIDE!



FOUR DEAD
BABIES HAVE
BEEN LEFT IN
YOUR DROP BOX
ALREADY. CAN
YOU RULE OUT
PROTEST AS A
MOTIVE...?

SEEING HOW
THINGS HAVE
TRANSPIRED,
IT'S OBVIOUS
THAT REALITY
AND IDEALS
ARE SOME-
WHAT DIFFER-
ENT THINGS.



HHH...SO
YOU'RE MISS
KIKUCHI.



...I-I KNOW
SOME PEOPLE
DON'T LIKE IT...
I JUST CAN'T
BELIEVE
THEY'RE THAT
GALLUS.



YOU CAN
INTERPRET IT
HOWEVER YOU
WANT...

DON'T
BELIEVE?
WHAT DOES
THE
EVIDENCE
SUGGEST?



...MAN, ONE
GIRL DIGGING
HIM IS BAD
ENOUGH...BUT
THAT IS REALLY
UNACCEPTABLE.



WTF, WHEN I
MENTIONED WHAT
YOU SAID ABOUT
KARATEU AND
THE NURSE
SEEMING TO HIT
IT OFF, SHE
INSISTED ON
COMING ALONG.

HEY, WHAT'S
SASAKI
DOING HERE
ANYWAY,
WITH ROUGH
LABORER
TYPES LIKE
OURSELVES?





UM, LET ME DEMONSTRATE...
...NUNATA, WILL YOU GET READY WITH THE CELL PHONE CAMERA?

RIGHT.



YEAH, THE SOUL IS STILL HERE... BUT IT FEELS... UNSTABLE, FOR SOME REASON...

"UNSTABLE?"



OKAY...
YOU GETTING SOMETHING?



BUT IT'S ALL RIGHT. I CAN SEE A...OKAY, TAKE THE PICTURE.

GOT IT.















JUST BEFORE THE FIRST MAN CAME BACK TO LIFE, I HEARD THE CORPSE SAY...





...YOU MIGHT SAY, IT WAS THE RESULT OF AN ACCIDENT.

NO...

WERE YOU BORN WITH THAT POWER?



...MAYBE THEY ARE MEANT FOR EACH OTHER.

as much as I have to admit it...



SEVEN PEOPLE SURVIVED THE CRASH... I WAS THE ONLY ONE TO LIVE THROUGH THE NIGHT.



YOU'RE YUJI KIKUCHI... THE MIRACLE OF FLIGHT 109.

I KNOW YOU. WHEN YOU WERE A KID, YOU WERE ALL OVER THE NEWS.



THAT'S A COMMON MISTAKE...



THE PLANE CRASH? THAT WAS YOUR? TWO HUNDRED PEOPLE DIED IN THAT CRASH... SHE WAS THE ONLY ONE TO SURVIVE...





PA...TH



"PATH"
...?



MAYBE
WE'LL
FIND
OUT.



IT WASN'T
MY IMAGI-
NATION. I
KNOW THAT
MUCH...

...BUT I
DON'T
KNOW
WHAT IT
MEANS.























WE DIDN'T HAVE TO.
THE LOCKER
IS THE
PATHWAY.

NEITHER
OF US
DROPPED
THEM
OFF.



WAIT A MINUTE,
SHE WAS
THERE AT THE
HOSPITAL--
HOW COULD
SHE HAVE
DROPPED IT
OFF?



THEN YOUR
GRANDMOTHER
WOULD...
KILL THE
BABY...AND
YOU WOULD
DROP IT
OFF...?



THE TRADITIONAL
METHOD TO SEND
THE BABY AWAY
WAS TO COVER THE
FACE WITH DAMP
PAPER, INDUCING
DEATH THROUGH
SUFFOCATION.

THE
LOCKER?



SHE WOULD PUT
THE BABY INTO THE
LOCKERS, PLACED AT
THE ANAGO-BUKE
WHERE THREE ROADS
MEET...AND THEN
WITH A PRAYER SHE
WAS ABLE TO SEND
THE BABY
BACK... BOTH BODY
AND SOUL.



MY GRAND-
MOTHER
USED A
DIFFERENT
METHOD...



BUT THERE WAS
ONCE ANOTHER
AKAGO-ZUKU IN
THIS TOWN--RAZED
YEARS AGO, WHEN
THEY CONSTRUCTED
THE NEW HOSPITAL.



THE AKAGO-ZUKU
WERE BUILT IN
PLACES THAT HAVE A
CONNECTION TO THE
SPIRIT REALM--LIKE
AN UMBILICAL IN
REVERSE...
RETRACTING INTO
DARKNESS.



IT WAS MORE
OR LESS WHERE
THE BABY DROP
BOX IS NOW.



...YOU
KNEW
...?



THEY PUT IT
THERE AT MY
SUGGESTION.



IT'S THE
HOSPITAL'S
FAULT FOR
PUTTING IT
IN THAT
LOCATION.

... WELL,
IT'S NOT
YOUR
FAULT, IS
IT...?





A WOMAN WHO
WANTS A BABY...
GOES TO SEE AN
OBSTETRICIAN, IF
SHE CAN AFFORD
A TRADITIONAL
MIDWIFE.



7"
7"



NO



NO



...AND THE
WORLD IS FULL
OF LITTLE
CROSSBOWS
LIKE THIS ONE.



IN ANYTIME,
IN ANYPLACE...
THERE ARE
WOMEN WHO
DON'T WANT A
BABY...



MY GRAND-
MOTHER
ALWAYS
WELCOMED
THEM WITH
OPEN ARMS.
ALWAYS.





THAT'S...
PART OF
IT...



...AND THAT
IS WHY YOU
SUGGESTED
THE BABY
DROPP?

SHE WOULD NEVER
GO TO A HOSPITAL,
EVEN FOR
HERSELF...EVEN
WHEN I TOLD HER I
WOULD START
WORKING THERE.
SHE SAID A MOTHER
IN NEED MIGHT COME
BY AT ANY TIME...



...IT'S
HARD TO
EXPLAIN.



I WAS THE CHILD
OF A CHILD WHO
WAS GONE. GROW-
ING UP WITH MY
GRANDMOTHER.
AFTER THE CRASH,
I WOULD WATCH
HER WORK...WATCH
THE CHILDREN GO
AND GO...





WELL... YOU
KNOW--



Yeah...
OK... I'LL
...I'LL
DO IT.

EXCUSE ME, I
NEED SAKAKI-
KUN TO
CLEANSE HER
BODY. CAN
SOMEONE BOIL
WATER?



AND
KIRIUCHI...



...EVEN
THOUGH
THINGS DIDN'T
WORK OUT...
THERE'S NO
DOUBT YOU
TRIED TO
SAVE THEM.



Should
rock the
fun I
wanted to
sp--



...WITH HER
GONE, IT'S
ALL OVER
ANYWAY.

THANK
YOU FOR
SAYING
THAT...



...ARE YOU
SURE YOU
DON'T NEED
TO SPEAK
TO HER?



THE LAST
THING IS TO
SEAL THE
MOUTH.



CARRY
ON...?

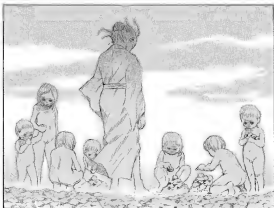
LIKE I TOLD YOU,
I CAN'T SPEAK TO
THEM. I CAN
ONLY HEAR A FEW
WORDS. IF THEY
CHOOSE TO
SPEAK...AND I
ALREADY DECIDED
TO CARRY ON
HER WORK.

















THANK
YOU FOR
DRIVING
ME BACK.



UM...ARE
YOU GOING
TO BE ALL
RIGHT?



HOW TO FACE
DEATH, I MEAN.
IT'S SOMETHING
A NURSE SHOULD
KNOW...DON'T
YOU THINK...?

...I KEEP
TRYING,
BUT I STILL
DON'T REALLY
KNOW.







BESIDES...
WHAT?



WHY DIDN'T
YOU JUST
COME OUT AND
ASK HER TO
JOIN US?



...BESIDES...

THAT'S
NOT WHAT
I WAS
THINKING



OH, IN THAT
CASE, I'LL
HAVE TO
TELL SASAKI
ON YOUR

ALWAYS
WHAT ARE
YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?

I HAVE A
FEELING I'LL
BE SEEING
HER AGAIN.

the KUROSAKI corpse delivery service

黒鷲死体宅配便

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DISJECTA MEMBRA

SOUND FX GLOSSARY AND NOTES ON KUROSAKI VOL. 6 BY TOSHIFUMI YOSHIDA

Introduction and additional comments by the editor

TO INCREASE YOUR ENJOYMENT of the distinctive Japanese visual style of this manga, we've included a guide to the sound effects (or "FX") used in this manga. It is suggested the reader not constantly consult this glossary as they read through, but regard it as supplemental information, in the manner of footnotes, or perhaps one of those nutritional supplements, the kind that's long and difficult to swallow. If you want to imagine it being read aloud by Osaka, after the manner of her lecture to Sakaki on hemorrhoids in episode five of *Azumanga Daioh*, please go right ahead. In either Yuki Matsuoka or Kira Vincent-Davis's voice—I like them both.

Japanese, like English, did not independently invent its own writing system, but instead borrowed and modified the system used by the then-dominant cultural power in its part of the world. We still call the letters we use to write English today the "Roman" alphabet, for the simple reason that about 1,600 years ago, the earliest English speakers, living on the frontier of the Roman Empire, began to use the same letters the Romans used for their Latin language to write out English.

Around that very same time, on the other side of the planet, Japan, like England, was another example of an island civilization lying across the sea from a great empire—in this case, that of China. Likewise, the Japanese borrowed from the Chinese writing system, which then, as now, consisted of thousands of complex symbols—today in China officially referred to in the Roman alphabet as *hanzi*, but which the Japanese

pronounce as *kanji*. For example, all the Japanese characters you see on the front cover of *The Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service*—the seven which make up the original title and the four each which make up the creators' names—are examples of *kanji*. Of course, all of them were *hanzi* first—although the Japanese did also invent some original *kanji* of their own, just as new *hanzi* have been created over the centuries as Chinese evolved.

(Note that whereas both "*kanji*" and "*hanzi*" are examples of foreign words written in Roman letters, "*kanji*" gives English speakers a fairly good idea of how the Japanese word is really pronounced—*khan-gee*—whereas "*hanzi*" does not—in Mandarin Chinese it sounds something like *n-tsuh*. The reason is fairly simple: whereas the most commonly used method of writing Japanese in Roman letters, the Hepburn system, was developed by a native English speaker, the most commonly used method of writing Chinese in Roman letters, called the Pinyin system, was developed by native Mandarin speakers. In fact, Pinyin was developed to help teach Mandarin pronunciation to speakers of other Chinese dialects; unlike Hepburn, it was not intended as a learning tool for English speakers per se, and hence has no particular obligation to "make sense" to English speakers or, indeed, to users of the many other languages spelled with the Roman alphabet.)

Whereas the various dialects of Chinese are written entirely in *hanzi*, it is impractical to render the Japanese language entirely in them. To compare once more, English

is a notoriously difficult language in which to spell properly, and this is in part because it uses an alphabet designed for another language, Latin, whose sounds are different (this is, of course, putting aside the fact the sounds of both languages experienced change over time). The challenges the Japanese faced in using the Chinese writing system for their own language were even greater, for whereas spoken English and Latin are at least from a common language family, spoken Japanese is unrelated to any of the various dialects of spoken Chinese. The complicated writing system the Japanese evolved represents an adjustment to those great differences.

When the Japanese borrowed *hanzi* to become *kanji*, what they were getting was a way to write out (remember, they already had ways to say) their vocabulary. Nouns, verbs, many adjectives, the names of places and people—that's what *kanji* are used for, the fundamental data of the written language. The practical use and processing of that "data"—its grammar and pronunciation—is another matter entirely. Because spoken Japanese neither sounds nor functions like Chinese, the first work-around tried was a system called *manyogana*, where individual *kanji* were picked to represent certain syllables in Japanese. A similar method is still used in Chinese today to spell out foreign names; companies and individuals often try to choose *hanzi* for this purpose that have an auspicious, or at least not insulting, meaning. As you will also observe in *Kurosagi* and elsewhere, the meaning behind the characters that make up a personal name are an important literary element of Japanese as well.

The commentary in Katsuya Teraoka's *The Monkey King* (also available from Dark Horse, and also translated by Toshifumi Yoshida) notes the importance that not

only Chinese, but also Indian culture had on Japan at this time in history—particularly, through Buddhism. Just as in Western history at this time, religious communities in Asia were associated with learning, as priests and monks were more likely to be literate than other groups in society. It is believed the Northeast Indian *Siddham* script studied by Kukai (died 835 AD), founder of the Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism, inspired him to create the solution for writing Japanese still used today. Kukai is credited with the idea of taking the *manyogana* and making shorthand versions of them—which are now known simply as *kana*. The improvement in efficiency was dramatic: a *kanji* previously used to represent a sound, that might have taken a dozen strokes to draw, was now replaced by a *kana* that took three or four.

Unlike the original *kanji* they were based on, the new *kana* had only a sound meaning. And unlike the thousands of *kanji*, there are only forty-six *kana*, which can be used to spell out any word in the Japanese language, including the many ordinarily written with *kanji* (Japanese keyboards work on this principle). The same set of forty-six *kana* is written two different ways depending on its intended use: cursive style, *hiragana*, and block style, *katakana*. Naturally, sound FX in manga are almost always written out using *kana*.

Kana works somewhat differently than the Roman alphabet. For example, while there are separate *kana* for each of the five vowels (the Japanese order is not A-E-I-O-U as in English, but A-I-U-E-O), there are, except for *n*, no separate *kana* for consonants (the middle *n* in the word *ninja* illustrates this exception). Instead, *kana* work by grouping together consonants with vowels: for example, there are five *kana* for sounds starting with *k*, depending on which vowel follows it—in Japanese

vowel order, they go KA, KI, KU, KE, KO. The next set of kana begins with s sounds, so SA, SHI, SU, SE, SO, and so on. You will observe this kind of consonant-vowel pattern in the FX listings for *Kurosagi* Vol. 8 below.

Katakana are generally used for manga sound FX, but on occasion hiragana are used instead. This is commonly done when the sound is one associated with a human body, but can be a subtler aesthetic choice by the artist as well. In *Kurosagi* Vol. 8 you can see an example on 32.7, with the SA of Rei turning her head away, which in hiragana style is written さっ. Note its more cursive appearance compared to the other FX. If it had been written in katakana style, it would look like サッ.

To see how to use this glossary, take an example from page 8: "6.4 FX: KYORO KYORO—looking around sound." 6.4 means the FX is the one on page 6, in panel 4. KYORO KYORO is the sound these kana—キロキロ—literally stand for. After the dash comes an explanation of what the sound represents (in some cases, like this, it will be less obvious than others). Note that in cases where there are two or more different sounds in a single panel, an extra number is used to differentiate them from right to left; or, in cases where right and left are less clear, in clockwise order.

The use of kana in these FX also illustrates another aspect of written Japanese—its flexible reading order. For example, the way you're reading the pages and panels of this book in general—going from right to left, and from top to bottom—is similar to the order in which Japanese is also written in most forms of print: books, magazines, and newspapers. However, some of the FX in *Kurosagi* (and manga in general) read left to right. This kind of flexibility is also to be found on Japanese web pages, which usually also read left to right. In other

words, Japanese doesn't simply read "the other way" from English; the Japanese themselves are used to reading it in several different directions.

As might be expected, some FX "sound" short, and others "sound" long. Manga represent this in different ways. One of many instances of "short sounds" in *Kurosagi* Vol. 8 is 6.2's SU—スッ. Note the small ッ mark it has at the end, which stands for the sound "tsu"—in hiragana, such as 32.7, it looks like っ. The half-size "tsu" seen at the end of FX like this means the sound is the kind which stops or cuts off suddenly; that's why 6.2 and 32.7 are written as SU and SA, and not SUTSU and SATSU—you don't pronounce the "tsu" when used this way. Note the small "tsu" has another occasional use inside, rather than at the end, of a particular FX, where it indicates a doubling of the consonant sound that follows it.

There are three different ways you may see "long sounds"—where a vowel sound is extended—written out as FX. One is with an ellipsis, as in 105.4's KOTO. Another is with an extended line, as in 61.6's HOOO HO HO HO HO. Still another is by simply repeating a vowel several times, as in 70.1's GOOOOO. You will note that the HOOO in 61.6's HOOO HO HO HO HO HO has a "tsu" at its end, suggesting an elongated sound that's suddenly cut off; the methods may be combined within a single FX. As a visual element in manga, FX are an art rather than a science, and are used in a less rigorous fashion than kana are in standard written Japanese.

The explanation of what the sound represents may sometimes be surprising, but every culture "hears" sounds differently. Note that manga FX do not even necessarily represent literal sounds. Such "mimetic" words, which represent an imagined sound,

or even a state of mind, are called *gitaigo* in Japanese. Like the onomatopoeic *giseigo* (the words used to represent literal sounds—i.e., most FX in this glossary are classed as *giseigo*), they are also used in colloquial speech and writing. A Japanese, for example, might say that something bounced by saying *PURIN*, or talk about eating by saying *MUGU MUGU*. It's something like describing chatter in English by saying "yadda yadda yadda" instead.

One important last note: all these spelled-out kana vowels should be pronounced as they are in Japanese: A as ah, I as ee, U as oo, E as eh, and O as oh.

2 All of the titles are once again song names. For this volume, the songs are by the folk rock group GARO. The band was made up of three members: Mamoru "Mark" Horuchi, Tomiaki "Tommy" Hidaka and Masumi "Vocal" Ono. With a sound sometimes compared to Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, they had a million-selling #1 hit with 1973's *Daigakuseikai no Kessaten* (which means "A Café in a Campus Town") and were an emblem of Japanese rock for the next two years, but broke up at the end of 1975.

5.2 The *tsubo* is a traditional Japanese measure of area—still in use even though Japan is metric—equal to 3.05785 sq. meters. The translator notes that if his math is correct, 500 *tsubo* is only 2/5 of an acre, but bear in mind that's impressive by Japanese land prices. Come to think of it, a lot that size (17,790 sq. feet) is nothing to sneeze at in America, either. In the immortal words of Harvey Korman (peace be upon him), "Land... Land: see snatch."

6.2 FX: **SU**—starting to step away

6.4 FX: **KYORO KYORO**—looking around sound

10.1 There are certain stations of the cross a school manga must traverse: among these are the beach episode, the hot-springs episode, and this, the first for Kurosagi, the campus-festival episode. The scene at the post office-owned spa resort in Vol. 6 might have counted as a hot-springs episode, but (and this is a qualification for all such episodes) it would have needed the main female and male characters present to allow full cast interaction—see *Genshiken* Vol. 8. Campus festivals in manga tend to be of three main types: the "culture fest," (usually an excuse to set up a themed café in one's homeroom), a track and field day, or this, the big student club sign-up. Kurosagi's version is pretty mild; the master of campus-festival scenes in manga is doubtless Kosuke Fujishima in *Oh My Goddess!*, especially in those early volumes, with all the teeny-tiny signs that needed to be retouched in such detail.

12.1 The editor himself might have patronized the rough tape-trade to be found in certain off-campus anime clubs, but he had no intention of introducing these beastly practices to the ivy-covered halls (actually, only Harwood had ivy on it; that's why it was used for the dorm scenes in *Real Genius*) of Pomona College, anno MCMLXXXVII. Instead he was part of the *Leiszez-Faire Club* at Pomona

College, whose purpose was to "smoke cigars, drink Cognac, and discuss the virtues of a free economy." The first two were a bit ahead of the curve, the cigar boom wouldn't hit for another ten years, and hip-hop hadn't yet discovered "yakk"; its most lavish ads were still in *The Far Eastern Economic Review* rather than *Vibe* (not after I cut them out of the magazine, however, and pasted them to the wall, together with any coverage of Amy Yip. And I know there weren't no *Vibe* magazine in '87, but please allow me the rhetorical indulgence). As for the third, there was a feeling among some students in 1987 that the Democrats were becoming the enemies of freedom rather than the Republicans. One could respect P. J. O'Rourke, denouncing drug tests and Olie North in his writing for *Rolling Stone*; one could have no respect whatsoever for Tipper Gore, pursuing the menace of Prince and Twisted Sister. The problem, of course, was that Republicans like P. J. O'Rourke weren't the kind gaining political power, whereas Democrats like Tipper Gore would continue to do so. In retrospect, the idea that tacking right would promote liberty wasn't the most well-considered opinion, but it was driven in part by the leisurely (as we did all things) contempt Gen-X had for the baby boomers in power. Not so much for their era, the terrible and glorious 1960s, but for their shame and resentment of it, for the pathetic spectacle of their culture war over who was on what side, that they maintained

(and still maintain) even as the country's real problems changed with the decades—bearing out once and for all, whether liberal or conservative, the charges laid against them when they were young: that their generation cared only about itself, and could not grow up.

- 13.5 FX: GATA—getting up out of chair
- 15.4 FX: KATA—opening laptop
- 15.7 FX: TATATA TATA—keyboard sounds
- 16.4 FX: BA—grabbing computer back
- 16.5 FX/balloon: GACHA—door opening

- 18.1 Even as we enjoy a few cheap laughs (for what other sort could the Kurosagi gang afford?), we do not wish to show disrespect to our esteemed comrades in the gothic-lolita community. Patrick Macias invited me to sit in on his "Japanese Schoolgirl Inferno" panel at AWIA (I'm not sure why he invited me to sit in—I'm more *Collezione* than *Emporio*). The panel was named for the book he wrote with coauthor Izumi Evers (the woman who created the look of *PULP* magazine) and illustrator Kazumi Nonaka—*Japanese Schoolgirl Inferno*, fun and wild, details the last forty years of Japanese school-girl fashion trends, from creation, to co-opting, to rejection, and then to reincarnation. Most importantly, it rejects the idea that fashion is necessarily superficial or something only purchased, but shows how it can be made from the ground up (sometimes, from the gutter up) to reflect a chosen meaning. Ephemeral—like all things. A major

asset to the panel was an elegantly actual goth lol in the front row, who discussed what the scene was like in Atlanta, GA, and the reaction to it, often unhip, but not always unkind (one old lady told her it was wonderful that young girls were starting to dress more modestly). The *New York Times*, ever alert to breaking news, picked up on the existence of goth lol recently (admittedly, I'm counting on them more to keep an eye on things like Iraq and the financial crisis). Initial comments on the Jezebel blog in reaction to the article included such remarks as: "What are they rebelling against?" "Messed up." "Makes me uncomfortable." "All this says to me is 'I want attention.'" "There is no point at which I do not find this subculture absolutely ridiculous." In other words, the exact same comments that have been made about every youth style since cavewalkers started wearing those stupid deer hides, instead of respectable beaverskins like their dads.

- 18.6** **FX: PAKU PAKU**—sound of the mouth flapping
- 18.3** This suggests he saw her "performance" at the fanboy's funeral in Vol. 5.
- 19.6** There's gotta be a name for that ponytail Nakano (vide Vol. 7, notes for 22.1) is sporting; only otaku have that ponytail. It goes back at least to Hino in *Otaku no Video*. Let's give it a name. *O-tail*, or *opptaku*, or maybe *otaku no suisel*. Japanese speakers are invited to weigh in on whether those last two sound clever.
- 20.2** Probably Asuka from *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. This is the point where

I might have attempted a smart remark about his life-size figure and those awful otaku, but as I'm the awful otaku editing the fan-service-filled *Neon Genesis Evangelion: The Shirji Ikarai Raising Project*, first volume out in June, it wouldn't sound quite right.

- 20.4** **FX: SU**—passing over a photo
- 23.4** **FX: SU**—touching body sound
- 23.5** **FX: KATA KATA KATATA**—body shaking
- 24.1** **FX/balloon: PIKU PIKU**—fingers twitching
- 24.2.1** **FX: SU**—removing hand
- 24.2.2** **FX/balloon: PITA**—body suddenly stopping
- 26.4** **FX/balloon: BURORORORO**—car sound
- 27.5** **FX: GURI**—pushing on the ring for his pendulum
- 27.6** **FX: CHARAN**—sound of metal chain dangling
- 28.3** **FX: HYUN HYUN HYUN**—sound of the pendulum swinging
- 29.6** **FX: BAKI BAKI GASASA**—breaking branches and sliding sound
- 32.7** **FX: SA**—turning head away
- 35.2** **FX: SU**—placing hand on body
- 44.4** There is an actual term, *yurui buin*, "ghost club members," used for the not-uncommon practice of campus clubs inflating their membership to claim more funding from their schools. It's done through the simple expedient of getting students to sign the club register, even if they have no intention of ever attending a meeting.

- 45.1** This is Mori Tower, the iconic building associated with Tokyo's trendy, expensive Roppongi Hills complex. Opening in 2003, it was first sighted in *Kurosagi* on page 70 of Vol. 5, and has served to literally hang over the heads of its main cast ever since, reminding them of just how nonmaterialistic their status is. Nakano back in 14.4 even mentioned that the campus golf club was having their new-member party in Roppongi Hills, putting *Kurosagi*'s basement meeting room in rather sharp contrast.
- 45.2.1** **FX/balloon:** BURORORO—engine sound
- 45.2.2** **FX/balloon:** KII—sound of brakes
- 45.3** **FX:** SHA SHA—scribbling sound
- 46-47** What's so wonderful about this chapter title page is that it puts me in mind of those 1970s "mystery" comics (as Howard Chaykin points out, the Comics Code wouldn't allow them to say "horror") where people were always getting maimed to ghosts, ghouls, and skeletons. Check out Dave Merrill and Steindie Minuk's Stupid Comics blog for some choice examples at <http://www.misterkitty.org/extras/stupido covers/stupido comics92.html>. Well, come to think of it, this story puts me a little in mind of them, too.
- 48.2** Note that the two kanji that spell Kanari's name mean "money" and "have."
- 49.1** **FX:** GURU—sound of the fridge toppling
- 49.5** The one vanity the editor has never been able to comprehend is designer pens. It might come from taking an early interest in cartooning (and calligraphy, which was big in the late '70s), which taught, as Thulsa Doom would say, what is the nib, compared to the hand that wields it?
- 50.1.1** **FX:** SU—taking out towel
- 50.1.2** **FX/balloon:** HIRA—sheet of paper falling out
- 50.2** **FX:** PASA—sheet of paper landing on floor
- 52.2** **FX/balloon:** SHUUU—sound of an automatic door opening
- 52.3** The phenomenon of people using manga cafés (*manikkāsa* in Japanese, after *kissaten*, "café"—basically, private manga libraries where one pays by the hour) to spend the night is known even outside Japan, thanks to Hiroko Tabuchi's widely syndicated piece for the Associated Press in May of 2007, which also discussed its relation to those who survive on part-time work arranged by cell phone. Tabuchi mentioned a net café (they are often also manga cafés) where cubicles rented for 82 cents an hour, showing that the 700-yen all-night package here is quite realistic.
- 52.4** **FX/balloon:** GISHI—chair creaking
- 52.5** **FX:** PATA—putting down pad of paper
- 53.1** **FX/balloon:** MOGU MOGU—eating sound
- 53.2** **FX:** SHA SHA—sketching sound
- 54.1** The translator notes that *bijin-ga* often refers to such glamour pictures of Japan's *ukyo-e*—the famous, frequently colorful woodblock prints that influenced the

Impressionists when Europe discovered them in the nineteenth century. However, the term can be applied to works in other media, even modern ones such as photography, as long as the subject remains a Japanese woman in traditional dress.

55.2 The traditional word for a wedding in Japanese is *kekkonshiki*, which combines three kanji by themselves pronounced *keitsu*, "union," *kon*, "marriage," and *shiki*, "ceremony" (the rules of Japanese pronunciation make the first two combine to be read *kekkon* instead of *keitsukon*). Kaneari changes this to the near-rhyming *mekkonshiki* by making the first kanji *mei*, "afterlife," instead.

55.3 Note the Mumume-tan figurine, no doubt left by the fleeing Nakano.

59.2 **FX: KATA**—rattle of the picture frame

59.3 As seen in Vol. 2. In the Silver Age, there would have been a big ol' box in the panel to remind you of this, but such primitive methods have been replaced with *Disjuncts Membra*.

61.6 **FX: HOOO HO HO HO HO**—chuckles. I'm not sure Makino is aware she's quoting *The 36th Chamber of Shaolin*, AKA *Master Killer*.

62.3 *Ema* means "horse picture," meaning that it is symbolic of the literal offering of a horse that used to be made (by those who could afford it) in exchange for a blessing at a Shinto shrine. Even today, some shrines maintain a stable for a *goshinma*, a horse kept by the priests for the gods to ride.

Excel, for whom there is no god but Il Palazzo, blasphemously stole the steed from one such temple in Vol. 1 of the *Excel Saga* manga.

62.6 Karatsu is making himself a little arch here (*get it?*); most Japanese don't stress too much about performing the rites of more than one religion—it should also be noted that, just as in America, performing the rites isn't necessarily a sign of deep personal belief, but may be done simply for tradition's sake, social obligation, or (especially with Shinto rites) having fun with friends. And just as we see here, many Japanese aren't adverse to Christian rites either, or at least, the appearance of them; some get married at places made up to look like churches, with an actor portraying a priest (as seems to be the case on page 78). There have, of course, been actual Japanese Christians for centuries (the new prime minister of Japan, Taro Aso, is Catholic), and there are also some Japanese of whatever faith who truly consider themselves "religious" in the American sense—but faith, or anything else for that matter, is rarely allowed to trump social harmony in Japan.

66.1 **FX: SU**—putting a photograph down

67.3 **FX: SU**—paintbrush touching *ema*

67.5 **FX: HYUOOOO**—sound of gusting wind

68.1 **FX: HYUUU**—sound of wind

68.4 **FX: KATA KATA GATA**—sound of the *ema* rattling. The *ema* says, by the way, "Dedication: New Bride

Kurara Gotokuji, Died 2007; New Groom Zetou Seijo, Died June 7, 2006. After Death Marriage." The 2007 date is taken from the fact this particular chapter of *Kurosagi* appeared in the June 5, 2007, issue of its current home magazine, *Comic Charge*.

70.1 **FX:** **GOOOOO**—sound of train pulling away

70.3.1 **FX/balloon:** **PI**—hanging up cell

70.3.2 **FX/balloon:** **KAN KO**—footstep on stairs

72.2 **FX:** **GUI**—tugging sound

72.4.1 **FX/black:** **GA DOKA**—impact sounds

72.4.2 **FX/white:** **BAKI BOKI**—breaking bone sounds

73.1 **FX:** **GO**—sound of head hitting floor

73.2 **FX/balloon:** **PIIPOO PIIPOO PIIPOO**—ambulance siren

74.4 As you might expect, Sasayama didn't say "Jane Doe" in the original, but *kooryo-shinaito*, "traveler deceased," a technical term for an unidentified body. Although Japan does sometimes use the name "Taro Yamada" to signify a generic Japanese (a little like the way you might use "John Smith" in America), there is no custom of assigning a standard pseudonym to the unidentified dead.

75.2 The editor doesn't even have a cell phone, not being what you'd call an early adopter (he did finally buy an iPod a few months ago—used, from his sempai, Toren Smith), but he doesn't think you can perform all these functions yet on an American cell phone. But the

rest of the world has always been a bit ahead of the cell curve. I remember some years ago Hiroyuki Yamaga (most recently, coproducer of *Gurren Lagann*, and director of its recap episode) showing off his 3G phone at Anime Con, before such things were available in the U.S. But of course, nothing would show up on its screen, as it used a Japan-only service. It felt like that scene in *Spinal Tap* where Nigel Tufnel says, "You would, though, if it were playing."

75.3 **FX:** **MOMI MOMI**—massaging shoulder

75.4 **FX:** **SU**—placing hand on body

77.1 **FX:** **SU**—pointing sound

77.2 **FX:** **SA**—lifting sheet

79.1 **FX:** **PA**—sound of spotlight turning on

79.2 **FX:** **PACHI PACHI PACHI PACHI**—clapping sounds

81.3 Not as in high school A/V, refuge of the chaste, but A/V as in "adult video"—the Japan porno industry uses the English-language term.

81.5 **FX/balloon:** **VUU VUU VUU**—cell phone vibrating

81.6 **FX:** **CHA**—putting phone to ear

82.3 **FX:** **TA**—putting glass down

84.1 **FX:** **BASA**—sound of photos being dumped on table

85.2 This time, the *musakari* ema reads "New Bride Ao Sasaki, Died 2007; New Groom Yaro Nozaki, Died 2005. After Death Marriage."

85.4 **FX:** **KATAN**—hanging ema

85.5 **FX:** **GARA PATAN**—closing shrine door

- 86.1 FX: BYUUU—gust of wind
- 86.3 FX/balloon: KATA KATA KATA KATAN—sound of the erza rattling
- 87.1 FX/balloon: JANKA JAKA JAAN—mobile phone ringing
- 88.2 FX/balloon: JARI—sound of footstep in gravel
- 89.4 FX: KAKOKO KAKO KAKOKO—keyboard sounds
- 90.2 FX: BA—turning around quickly
- 90.6 FX/balloon: TO—back of foot hitting bookshelf
- 91.2 FX: GU—gripping throat sound
- 93.2 FX/balloons: CHAKKA CHAKKA—sound of the blinkers flashing
- 94.2 FX/balloon: PAAAN—gunshot
- 94.3 FX/balloon: TSUU TSUU TSUU TSUU—busy line sound
- 95.5 The term used in the original Japanese was *keizai yakuza*, “financial gangsters,” a phrase that arose in the 1980s as some mobsters started getting MBAs. Exactly how many businesses in Roppongi Hills have yakuza money behind them is open to debate, and the speculation is colored by resentment and envy towards the upscale nature of the complex (in what is already one of the most expensive cities in the world). However, yakuza involvement in legitimate business (as well as their more traditional ones) is no mere manga story. A humorous and no-nonsense introduction to the realities of the yakuza is Robert Whiting’s *Tokyo Underworld: The Fast Times and Hard Life of an American Gangster in Japan*. This 1999 book is sort of *Megafakyo* meets *The Godfather*, based around the true story of Nick Zapetti, a petty New York mobster who went to Roppongi and opened a pizza parlor patronized by the yakuza, styling himself “the Mafia Boss of Tokyo” and changing his name to Koizumi (!). Along the way, Whiting has a lot to say about organized crime’s influence on politics and the economy in Japan—and how U.S. business and government interests haven’t been above trying to make their own deals with it.
- 96.3 FX: CHA—readying gun sound
- 96.5 FX: PAAAN—gunshot
- 97.2 FX/balloon: TATA—running sound
- 97.3 FX/balloon: TA—coming to a stop
- 97.5.1 FX/balloons: PACHI PACHI—hitting up button
- 97.5.2 FX/balloon: PACHI—hitting up button
- 98.2 FX: GUGUGUGU—squeezing sound
- 98.4 FX: DARAN—arms going limp
- 98.5 FX/balloon: NII—smirk
- 100.1 FX: DOSA—Sasaki hitting floor
- 100.4 FX: PAKIIN—sound of erza breaking
- 101.4 FX: DON DON DON—banging on door
- 102.1 FX/balloon: GACHA—door opening
- 102.5 FX: HYUN HYUN—sound of pendulum swinging
- 104.1 It seems to me that you rarely see the punched-in aspect of a bullet wound portrayed this way in American comics; there’s even

a suggestion of the bull's spin. I wonder whether in Kurosagi's Housui Yamazaki and *MPD-Psycho*'s Sho-u Tajima, author Eiji Otsuka found the kind of artists whose relatively clean, clinical style supports an idea Philip Simon and I sense in Otsuka's work—not simply voyeurism, but the consciousness of voyeurism. Perhaps due to his anthropologist's training, he seems to take as a given that many of us humans (including, of course, himself) are inclined to stare at and perhaps even like the lurid, the extreme, or the taboo. Rather than say "don't look," or "you shouldn't look," or "oh, what a terrible thing it is to look at this," Otsuka is interested in what might be learned if on such occasions we decided to look at our looking. The immediate inspiration for *MPD-Psycho*, which premiered in 1997, was not only the Aum Shinrikyo cult terrorist attacks two years before, but also the media frenzy surrounding them, which famously led Akira's Katsuhiro Otomo to declare that the reporters came off as crazier than the cult—but of course, presumably, it earned ratings.

105.1 Imagine a country where someone's dead of a pistol wound, and you can immediately assume it was organized crime. Most handgun deaths here are hardly that colorful. See also the notes for Vol. 1's 51.3 for how Kurosagi illustrates the difference between Japan's gun culture and our own.

105.4 **FX: KOTO**—putting a board down on the table

106.1 **FX: KOKI**—cracking knuckles

106.2 **FX: SU**—placing hand on body

107.4 **FX/balloons: PINPOON PINPOON**—doorbell sound

107.5 **FX/balloon: PI**—pressing button

109.1 **FX: KATA**—putting glass down

109.2 **FX: GATAN**—falling down sound

109.5.1 **FX: ZU ZU**—being pulled down sound

109.5.2 **FX/balloon: KACHI KACHI**—bottles rattling

109.5.3 **FX/balloon: KATA**—rattling sound

109.5.4 **FX/balloon: KATAN**—glass falling over

110.1-2 **FX: NU NUUUUU**—sound of head coming through table. The ghost is wearing the *tsunokakushi*, the traditional bridal headdress of a Shinto wedding (seen earlier, of course, on several of the *ema*). Japanese tradition says it is to hide the "horns" of evil impulses held by the bride—selfishness and jealousy (often meaning "jealousness" towards the mistresses it is assumed her husband will take!). It has been claimed that the move towards Christian-style weddings (not necessarily Christian weddings; see the note for 62.6) represents a wish by some Japanese women to reject the symbolism of the *tsunokakushi*, but it's the editor's impression that it's more a decision of style than symbolism. Weddings in Japan, as they are in many places, are often an occasion for deeply traditional gestures, not necessarily deeply held attitudes; in particular, no one expects a marriage in 2007 Japan to be like that of 1957, or even 1987 (the country having gone through

something of a quiet sexual revolution in the 1990s—the upside of its long recession being a loosening of social restrictions, as old institutions and attitudes lost respect.) One of Otsuka's constant themes as a writer, though, is the *latent* power of folklore, and the idea that every society lives in both its present and past.

- 111.4 FX: FU—sound of the lights going out
- 112-113.1 FX: WAAAAAA—final scream
- 115.1 FX: KATA—picking up broken ema
- 115.3 FX/balloon: BO—ema catching fire
- 115.4 FX: PACHI PACHI—crackling fire sound
- 115.6 FX: HYUQOO—sound of the wind gusting
- 116.1 FX: KATA KATA—ema rattling
- 116.2 FX: KATA KATA—ema rattling
- 117.1 FX: MIIN MIIN—sound of cicadas
- 118.2 FX/balloon: KII—bike brake sound
- 118.3 FX: KIII—locker creaking closed
- 118.4 FX: PATA—locker door closing
- 118.6 FX: KARARA—sound of bike rolling
- 119.1 FX: KIII—bike brakes
- 119.3 Roadside coin lockers, like roadside vending machines (see notes for Vol. 2, 105.1), or ads that hang from subway ceilings without being snatched down, are all testament to Japan's lingering sense of social restraint. Of course, as Haruki Murakami wrote in *Underground*, his study of the Aum Shinrikyo terror attacks, that restraint

extended to its victims writhing poisoned beneath those very same subway ads, receiving no help from their fellow passengers—not so much out of callousness, but out of a wish to wait until a station was reached, and the matter could be dealt with by the authorities. This, incidentally, is also what enables one to enjoy the most shocking manga on a train without fear of offending others (it's not like all Japanese are into sex and violence, or manga for that matter), for what would be truly impolite would be to notice.

- 119.4.1 FX/balloon: GOTOTO—sound of something moving inside
- 119.4.2 FX/balloon: GOSO—sound of something shifting inside
- 119.7 FX: KIII—locker door creaking
- 120.1 FX: OGYAAAA ONGYAAAA
OGYAAA GYAAA GYAA—baby wailing
- 120.2 FX: OGYAA NGYAAA—more wailing
- 120.3 FX: GUGYAAA—wailing starting to fade
- 121.1 FX: GYAAA—small wailing wail
- 121.2 FX: BAAAA—locker slamming shut
- 121.3 FX: SHAAAA—sound of bikes speeding away
- 121.6 *Namu amida butsu* is a traditional chant associated with Pure Land Buddhism (see notes for Vol. 7's 6.2.2), although Karatsu's *namida* way back in Vol. 1's 11.4 was a variation on it. *Amida butsu* refers to the Buddha Amida, or Amitabha, whereas *namu* derives from the Sanskrit *namaste*, often translated

hail," "praise," or "amen," and a part of many longer prayers.

122-123 The editor was talking over Vol. 8 with his pal, Director of Asian Licensing Michael Gombos, when Gombos gave a discourse on the shoes in this scene. It seems these sorts of sandals—two Velcro straps over the toe and one over the ankle—are the type commonly worn by nurses and teachers in Japan. Japanese teachers do a bit more walking than American ones, as, in Japan, it's the teachers who move from class to class each period, while the students stay put in a homeroom. When teachers get to school, they take off the shoes they arrived in, and switch to these sandals in the *shokun-shitsu*, the teachers' room. Now, what Gombos found interesting is that even though this footwear is as cheap as the 1,000 yen *oyaigutsu* that old men wear—the slip-ons with the faux patent leather and the fake gold chains—that they are, in short, as he put it, "the least boner-ific imaginable," they nevertheless become a fetish to those lads who find themselves with strange and wonderful feelings towards a certain teacher, or, presumably, health-care professional. At this point I invoked Rule 34, but Gombos riposted this was an Internet rule. We wondered whether an appropriate corollary for reality might not be called Rule 34A, for "actual," or perhaps 34', for "prime," sort of like the E' that designates Kereellis on the back cover of this book. Gombos pointed out this might imply reality has now become the puppet of the Internet,

but I said that was more a plot point for Vol. 10. Anyway, it seemed we were starting to digress a little from the shoes, so I mentioned it seemed odd, this thing about nurses wearing open-toed sandals, since wouldn't there be a hygiene issue? But Gombos pointed out this is Japan, where you're allowed to smoke in the hospital. And that pretty much put paid to all Japanese ways we might consider strange, because before we tut-tut, let us reflect that as of 2007, the average Japanese lived to 82, whereas the average American made it no further than 78.

- 124.1 Once again, this is the Kadokawa Central Hospital, evidently just another part of the publisher's inescapable empire.
- 126.6 FX: GU—grasping body
- 126.7 FX: GORORI—turning body over
- 128.2 FX: PACHI—eyes opening
- 128.3 FX: NYU—starting to frown
- 128.4 FX: GUNYU—scrunching face
- 129.1 FX: ONGYAAAAA GYAAA
HONGYAAAAAA—wailing like a baby
- 130.1 FX: NGYAAA AAAA GYAAA
ONGYAAA—wailing
- 130.3 FX: TATATATA—running off
- 130.5 FX: OGYAAAAA OGYAAA
NGYAAA—wailing
- 130.6 FX: PIII PIII PIII—alarm sound
- 131.1 FX: DADADADA—running sound
- 131.2 FX: GACHA—door opening
- 133.4 There was, of course, the incident last September in Omaha (which

- sounds Japanese, but it's in Nebraska) where a widower, who said he was unable to care for them any longer, left nine of his children at a hospital under a similar law. Although it seemed outrageous, there was a surprising amount of sympathy for the father's decision, with those supporting him saying it reflected a lack of government assistance to families, and pointing out it's not unknown for parents overwhelmed by stress to abuse or even kill their children. In the words of Bushwick Bill, "It's a fucked-up situation, I feel sorry for the families, but this song was inspired by the truth."
- 133.5 FX: Kill—door creaking open**
- 134.2** Japan has a national health-care plan, but unlike those in many Western European countries, it doesn't pay for abortion (or contraception, for that matter). Many people are surprised to hear the birth-control pill was only legalized there in 1999, and condoms and the "rhythm method" remain the most common forms of contraception—which means that abortion remains a common default method of "birth control" as well.
- 135.4 FX: SU—placing hand on baby**
- 136.1 FX: SU—lifting hand**
- 137.2** "Angel Care" is the actual term used in Japanese nursing, pronounced *enzerukae* ("en-zeh-roo-keh-ah") and the procedure is in fact as shown here and in more detail later on in "7th Delivery." It should be emphasized that its intent is to make the body temporarily presentable, as opposed to embalming, which seeks to slow its decay over the longer term.
- 140.4 FX: CHARA—pendulum dangling**
- 141.2 FX: KON—hitting with cane**
- 142.3 FX: Kill—door opening**
- 142.4 FX: GOTON—baby being dropped off**
- 143.1 FX: PIII PIII PIII—alarm sound**
- 143.2 FX: PIII PIII—alarm sound**
- 143.6 FX: ZA—footsteps**
- 150.2 FX: SU—placing hand on baby**
- 151.1 FX: KASHA—shutter sound**
- 152.4 FX: GOTO GOTO GOTO GO GOTO—sound of something moving around loudly**
- 152.5 FX: DON GOTO DOKO GON—sound of pounding on the little door**
- 153.3 FX: GAAAA—sound of the drawer being slid out**
- 153.4 FX: MOGO GOSO MOGOGO GOSO GUMO—sound of struggling and muffled groans**
- 154.11 FX/white: BARI—body bag opening up**
- 154.12 FX/black: OGYAAA GYAAA AAAAA OGYAAA ONGYAAAA—baby wails**
- 154.2 FX: ONGYAAA ONGYAAA ONGYAAAA—baby wails**
- 155.1 FX: PATATATA—sound of a distant helicopter**
- 157.6 FX: PATATATA PATATATA—distant helicopter sound**
- 158** This is almost certainly inspired by the infamous JAL Flight 123, which crashed into Japan's Mount Osutaka in the early evening of August 12, 1985, killing 520 people—still the deadliest single aircraft disaster in history. Four

were found alive (including a mother and her eight-year-old daughter) when rescue crews landed in the remote area the next morning, although Yumi Ochiai, a flight attendant who was one of the four, later said that she could see the search helicopters during the night (its pilot had originally reported no sign of survivors) and could hear screams and moans that gradually weakened.

158.1 FX: BATATATA—helicopter sound

159.7 FX: BA—eyes opening suddenly

162.5 Yata is making reference to the legend of the *Ko Sodate Yurer*; please see the notes in Vol. 4 for 147.4 for more details.

164.1 FX: GWOOOO—sound of a speeding car

164.3 FX/balloon: GYUKYUKYUO—tires squealing

164.5 FX: DON—sound of the tires hitting the road

165.1 FX/balloon: JANKA JAKA CHARAN—ring tone

165.5 FX/balloon: PI—hanging up

166.1 FX/balloon: KIII—car braking

166.2 FX: ZA—footstep

167.7 FX: GARARA—sound of a sliding door opening

170.6 Carl Djerassi, one of the original developers of oral contraceptives in the 1950s, wrote in his 2003 memoir *This Man's FW* that abortions in Japan can be very expensive—as much as \$2,000 (in the United States, they tend to range between \$300 and \$1,000), and suggests lobbying by doctors

eager to keep this revenue was a factor behind the great delay in birth-control pills becoming legal in Japan. By contrast, Djerassi notes, Viagra was made legal in Japan less than a year after it came on the market in the U.S. (there are stories of foreigners during those few months paying for an entire trip in Japan by bringing a Viagra prescription to sell off at \$200 a pill). A *josanbu*'s "services" would presumably be much less; nor would such a traditional midwife report the "procedure," as a doctor is required to by law in Japan for an abortion.

172.3 FX/inset: GOTON—sound of a baby dropping into the pot

175.1 FX: GORORI—body being rolled over

175.2 FX: GUGU—pressure being applied to stomach

175.3 FX/balloon: DORORI—fluid oozing out

175.5 Infanticide is in no way legal in Japan (abortions are permitted only through the twenty-second week of pregnancy), nor is it an act a typical Japanese woman would commit without feeling personal guilt and remorse; the story "Maternal Instinct" in Vol. 3 of Housui Yamazaki's *Mai* deals with a variation on this theme. But with the greater acceptance of abortion in general, there has been more willingness to accept "stillbirths" when the only ones in the know are the *josanbu* and the pregnant woman herself. Sasayama alludes to such attitudes in Vol. 6's 143.1. As with the mysterious "crying woman"

of Volumes 5 and 6, Otsuka uses a crane (in an archetypal and not pejorative sense) to embody acts that once had a ritualistic conception, but today are often just acts.

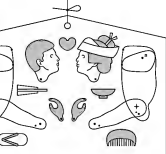
- 176.2 FX/balloon: PI—pooling off sound
- 176.3 FX/balloon: KUPA—eyelid being spread open
- 176.4 FX/balloon: PITO—eye cover/ sticker being applied
- 177.1.1 FX: GUUUU—pressure being applied to lower abdomen
- 177.1.2 FX/balloon: BUPI—bowels evacuating
- 177.2 FX: KACHA—putting on metal cover
- 177.3 FX: NURU—spreading lubricant
- 177.4 FX/balloon: GURI—pushing in funnel-like instrument
- 177.5.1 FX/balloon: ZUBU—sound of cotton being pushed in
- 177.5.2 FX/balloon: ZUBUBU—more cotton being inserted
- 184.2.1 FX/balloon: KACHI—sound of stone being stacked
- 184.2.2 FX/balloon: KACHA—more stones
- 184.3 FX/balloon: KOTO—stone being placed on top
- 185.1 FX: MIIN MIIN—sound of oodas
- 185.3 Kikuchi's grandmother is seen acting in the role of Jizo, the incarnation of the Buddha who took a vow to save the souls of those trapped in the realms of hell. William R. LaFleur's *Liquid Life: Abortion and Buddhism in Japan* (the title refers to *mizuko*, "water baby"; i.e., miscarriages and

abortions) speaks of the folk belief that such souls end up on a deserted riverbank known as *Saino-kawara* in Meido, the realm of the dead. There, they play by stacking stones, an act that earns grace for their families on Earth. But at night, they are frightened by demons who come to knock down the stones. Jizo is said to wander the riverbank as a guardian, protecting the *mizuko* and praying for their eventual salvation. LaFleur notes that although this belief is comforting to women who have had such experiences, Buddhist temples make a good business of it, too, by selling personal Jizo figurines that can be decorated with children's clothing or toys; the author saw literally thousands of them lining the courtyards and walkways of a temple in Kamakura.

- 185.5 FX/balloon: BATAN BATAN BAKON—sound of wooden locker doors opening and slamming shut
- 185.6 FX: BAN BATAN BAN—slamming/ banging sounds
- 186.1 FX/balloon: BATAN BATAAN BAGON—sound of wooden locker doors opening and slamming shut
- 186.2.1 FX/balloon: BAN BAN BAN—sound of wooden locker doors opening and slamming shut
- 186.2.2 FX/meal: OGYAA OGYAA—faint sound of a wailing baby
- 186.3.1 FX/meal: OGYAA OGYAA OGYAA OGYAA—faint sound of a wailing baby
- 186.3.2 FX/balloon: MEKI—sound of wood cracking
- 186.3.3 FX/balloon: BEKI—sound of wood breaking

- 186.3.4 FX/balloon: MEKI—sound of wood cracking
- 186.4.1 FX/balloon: BAKI—sound of wood breaking
- 186.4.2 FX/balloon: BEKI—sound of wood breaking
- 188.4.3 FX/balloon: BEKI—sound of wood breaking
- 186.5 FX: GOGOGOGO—rumbling
- 186.6 FX: GOFU—small imploding sound
- 189.4 FX: BURORO—car sound
- 189.5 FX: GOTOTOTOTO—sound of car rattling

189-190 The editor can't help but wonder if the staging of the last scene is meant to be reminiscent of the end of Hayao Miyazaki's 1979 classic *Lupin III: The Castle of Cagliostro*. Numata, with his grin, goatee, and most especially, bent cigarette, seems to conjure Jigen. Cagliostro, made a decade before Miyazaki broke out to the wider public with *Kiki's Delivery Service* (his first box-office smash), was actually his directorial debut in film, although he had directed TV anime beforehand. It's probably the greatest pure adventure film anime has produced, comparable in speed, wit, and excitement to its near-contemporary, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (incidentally, the Spielberg praise-quote on the Special Edition DVD for *Cagliostro* has never, to my knowledge, actually been confirmed, but is simply based on a fan rumor dating back to the early '80s that he *did* like the movie!). It is true that Miyazaki's knight-errant take on Lupin reformed the reprobate seen in the original *Lupin III* manga (published by Tokyopop), but in Miyazaki's hands, it was magic.



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